

Gender and Ethnic Groups Development Plan

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GENDER AND ETHNIC GROUPS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. The Basic Education Sector Development Program (BESDP) in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) provides significant benefits to students by increasing access to lower secondary (LS) schools in 6 target provinces of Champasak, Attapeu, Bokeo, Savannakhet, Khammuane, and Luang Namtha, improving the quality of the basic education system, and strengthening the capacity for effective education planning and management. The Gender and Ethnic Groups Development Plan (GEGDP)¹ highlights actions that are included in the BESDP. The GEGDP aims at achieving equity, reducing gender and socio-cultural disparities, overcoming barriers and obstacles for girls and ethnic groups, and ensuring equal access to better and high quality LSE and skills training. It is based on: (i) a gender analysis; (ii) an analysis of ethnic groups; (iii) primary and secondary data collection; (iv) consultations with girls and boys in LS schools from different ethnic groups; and (v) discussions with government officials and mass organizations. It builds upon ongoing initiatives carried out in previous ADB-funded projects, following these basic principles: (i) where possible, prioritize resource allocation to geographically targeted remote ethnic group areas, especially where gender disparities tend to be larger; (ii) promote participation of ethnic groups and females in project activities; (iii) promote gender- and ethnic-sensitive curriculum, materials, and policy and strategy development; (iv) address needs and constraints of ethnic students, female students, teachers, government officials, and project staff; and (v) strengthen capacity of relevant institutions that address ethnic and gender concerns and equality in education. The GEGDP follows Lao PDR regulations, ADB's policy on gender and development, and ADB's indigenous people's policy.

A. Program Description

2. BESDP supports the long-term goal of education reform and development in Lao PDR, and contributes towards the achievement of Lao PDR's Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2 and 3, and the country's goal of exiting the least-developed countries by 2020. In the long-run, it has the potential of contributing to MDG 1 on poverty reduction, as better education and training helps to broaden access to wage opportunities, enable economic diversification, and initiate micro-business development. Education and literacy are key factors in achieving sustained economic growth, poverty reduction, and gender equity. Studies have indicated that each extra year of schooling increases labor productivity and earning potential. Students, therefore, will witness a higher return on their investment in education, and a greater ability to escape the cycle of poverty.

3. BESDP, a sector development program, combines two lending modalities for policy support and direct investment. Both complement each other to enable progress towards achieving key sectoral objectives. It provides policy support by employing a program-based approach through a common policy matrix. The investment portion of BESDP provides direction assistance for (i) improving and expanding access to lower secondary education opportunities, (ii) improving the quality of formal lower secondary education, and (iii) strengthening decentralized planning, management, and delivery of education services.

B. Overview of Gender and Ethnic Groups

4. Lao PDR is a diverse and multi-ethnic state whose citizens consist of 49 distinct ethnic groups grouped into four main ethno-linguistic groups: (i) Tai-Kadai comprises of 8 ethnic groups (66.2%), (ii) Austro-Asiatic of 32 ethnic groups (23%), (iii) Hmong-Yu Mien of 2 ethnic

¹ During preparation of the BESDP, ethnic groups from 3 ethno-linguistic groups of Austro-Asiatic, Hmong-Yu Mien, and Sino-Tibetan were identified as the relevant ethnic groups for this action plan, as required by ADB's indigenous peoples policy. Additional ethnic groups may be identified during project implementation.

groups (7.4%), and (iv) Sino-Tibetan of 7 ethnic groups (2.7%). The Tai-Kadai ethno-linguistic group (or Lao) accounts for about 66% of the nation's population, and is the largest ethno-linguistic group in only 8 of the 18 provinces: Attapeu, Champasack, Khammuane, Saravan, Savannakhet, Vientiane City, Vientiane Province and Xiengkhouang (Population and Housing Census, 2005). Distribution of ethnic population in 6 BESDP provinces is in Table A5.1.

Table A5.1: Percentage of Ethnic Groups by BESDP Province

Province	Population	Largest Group	%	Second Group	%	Third Group	%	% Total Ethnic
Attapeu	87,229	Lao	36.9	Lavae	17.4	Oey	16.4	63.1
Bokeo	113,612	Khmu	23.8	Lue	20.6	Lao	13.4	86.6
Champasak	501,387	Lao	84.8	Laven	4.9	Xuay	2.4	15.2
Khammuane	272,463	Lao	59.4	Phutai	21.7	Makong	13.4	40.6
Luang Namtha	114,741	Khmu	24.7	Kor	23.9	Leu	15.8	97.7
Savannakhet	671,758	Lao	57.5	Phutai	18.9	Katang	8.7	42.5
Total	1,761,190							

Source: Lao Front for National Construction, Department of Ethnic Affairs, 1999.

5. Out of 142 districts in 18 provinces, 47 districts have been categorized as the poorest districts. Most of these districts have ethnic groups located in rural and mountainous areas of the country. Geographical, economic, and cultural constraints often result in limited education and health services for ethnic groups. According to the Census, ethnic groups often have poorer housing and sanitary conditions, lesser access to roads and markets, and lower levels of health and education. Ethnic communities may not value social services, and social service providers may have limited understanding of ethnic needs and values. Poverty among ethnic groups is closely associated with limited access to education and training opportunities.

6. While the quality of education is a national concern, it is a particular concern for ethnic groups in rural, remote and mountainous areas. According to the Education for All National Plan of Action (EFA NPA, 2003-2015), main reasons include: (i) lack of infrastructure; (ii) physical inaccessibility to schools due to distance; (iii) language and cultural barriers; (iv) lack or limited quality of teachers, (v) lack of textbooks and teaching/learning materials, (vi) lack of relevant curricula to local situations; (vii) perceptions and beliefs that returns from education are low; (viii) and low household affordability. These trends present a major challenge for the country to eradicate mass poverty by 2010.

7. Access to social services is more limited for women and girls. More than 85% of Lao women live and work in farming households, and perform the bulk of household work. Children, especially girls, help in agricultural and domestic duties (i.e., water collection, childcare, etc.). Children residing at greater distances from schools, especially in the poor and poorest provinces, have limited access to education than those in urban areas. Issues of access, cost of education (e.g., school fees), safety, and teaching quality are some factors that influence parents' decisions on sending their children to school. The opportunity cost of sending girls to lower secondary schools due to these factors is more significant.

C. Legal Framework and Regulations

8. The Constitution of Lao PDR, ratified in 1991, uses the term "citizens of all ethnicity" throughout the document. It specifically recognizes the need to incorporate the concerns of ethnic groups in developing policy in all sectors, and has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthen the rights of all ethnic groups in various congresses, conferences, decrees, and laws since the 1980s (Articles 8 and 22). Article 75 of the Constitution specifically indicates that "the Lao language and script are the official language and script."

9. Promoting gender equality is an important national goal of the Lao PDR, which is reflected in the National Strategy for the Development of Women (NSDW, 1998–2005),² in the 1991 Constitution (Articles 22 and 24), and in a number of international commitments. The National Commission for the Advancement of Women-Lao PDR (NCAW-Lao) was established in 1991 to help ensure women’s equal access to basic services and productive resources for achieving equity, efficiency, and effectiveness of policies and projects. NCAW-Lao develops the NSDW and reports directly to the Government. The Lao Women’s Union helps to implement it.

10. Women represent about one-third of all management positions in the education system (Table A5.2). Female representation in leadership positions at all levels is limited, but is better within the targeted BESDP districts.

Table A5.2: Female Representation within the Education Sector, Lao PDR

Level	Position Description	Total		Incentive (kip/level)
		No.	%Female	
I.	Vice Minister, Rector of University	3	33%	80,000
II.	Director General of Department, Deputy Rector of University, Dean of Faculty	38	2.65%	25,000
III.	Deputy Director of Department, Head of PES, Director of TTC, Vice Dean of Faculty, Head of Office/Dept, NOUL	141	9.92%	19,000
IV.	Head of Division, Deputy Head of PES	280	12.5%	14,000
V.	Deputy Head of Division, Deputy Head of Depts, Director of Upper/Complete Secondary School, Head of Division of PES, Heads of Division of NOUL, Head of DEB, Director of Technical School,	895	8.93%	10,000
VI.	Deputy of Division, Deputy Head of DEB, Director of Lower Secondary School	2081	8.72%	7,000
VII.	Head Master of Primary School, Head of Units of DEB	5755	8.58%	5,000
VIII.	Personnel (no-titles), technical staff, teachers	44738	51.43%	0
Total		53915	44.17%	39,937,000

DEB=District Education Bureau; PES=Prefecture/Provincial Education Services; TTC=Teacher Training Centers.
Source: Department of Personnel, Ministry of Education, 3 May 2006.

11. The Government’s National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES, 2004), the Government’s Sixth Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP-6, 2006-2010), Education Strategic Vision 2000-2020 (MOE, 2001), Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP 2006-2010), and EFA NPA (2003-2015) provide guidelines for ensuring equity and gender equality including access to education and skills development, especially for ethnic girls in poor and disadvantaged areas. The EFA NPA and the ESDP both stress critical targets regarding gender mainstreaming: (i) gender equality in education up to the secondary level; and (ii) curriculum and teacher training oriented towards eliminating biases against girls. The school mapping exercise undertaken in all 18 provinces and 142 districts, within the framework of the UNESCO project³ for EFA planning at PES/DEB level was useful in identifying schools by type, and enrollments by ethnicity and by gender.

12. A number of objectives are cited in EFA NPA (2003-2015), Program 3: *Access to and Participation in Lower and Upper Secondary Education*. They include: (i) develop LS school network to (a) increase enrollments of ethnic children from rural/remote areas, and (b) respond to demand from Grade 5 graduates; (ii) train, recruit and deploy LS school teachers according to needs, as determined by the Annual School Mapping Program; (iii) reduce dropout rates in LS

² A new NSDW strategy (2005–2010) is under preparation by NCAW-Lao.

³ UNESCO project, “EFA planning at PES and DEB level,” from 2005 to 2006.

schools, especially in rural and remote areas; (iv) improve the quality and relevance of LSE; and (v) design schemes to promote LSE retention among poor and ethnic children, especially girls.

D. Gender and Ethnic Groups Development Plan

13. Specific actions, as outlined in the GEGDP in Table A5.3, will be implemented and refined as required. New actions will also be considered for inclusion, as deemed appropriate.

Table A5.3: Gender and Ethnic Groups Development Plan

BESDP Components	Actions proposed
Component A: Expanded access for formal lower secondary education	
A.1. Promote equitable access and A.2. Alleviate pressure on existing school facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide new school buildings and additional classrooms in 10 poor/poorest districts, where female or ethnic students, especially ethnic girls, have high drop-out rates. Construct facilities conducive to increasing female enrollment.
A.3. Support poor students/schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide 1310 LSSG scholarships to poor ethnic girls (graduates from primary school) from poor districts for LSE, of which at least 2/3 will be reserved for girls. Provide education development grants to 77 rural LS/CS schools to improve school conditions and initiate activities to attract female and students from ethnic groups. Establish a student-parent association (SPA) in each of the 77 rural schools, according to <i>Regulations of the Association</i> (No.269/MOE/2002/21 February 2002) with modifications. The government will, wherever feasible, work to ensure at least 40% of the SPA members are women. At least 1 girl and 1 boy will be student representatives. Each SPA is representative of the ethnic composition of the school (i.e., teachers, students, parents) and the host-village of the school. Each SPA shall consult with both sexes and different ethnic students, or their student representatives, before deciding on grant-funded activities. Deploy ethnic LSE teachers by recruiting and training them according to priority development needs assessed by the school map.
A.4. Conduct LSE studies on access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include gender/ethnic-specific factors into the one study on baseline factors that inhibit participation and retention in LSE, and the alternative modes of LS delivery, modes of subsidy, and nature of incentives to encourage enrollments. Undertake focus-group interviews when confirming the factors with teachers and students of different sexes, ethnicity, ages and income levels.
Component B: Improving the quality of formal lower secondary education	
B.1. Improve curriculum development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the new curriculum (grades 1-12) and curriculum guides are fully sensitive to gender and ethnic group issues and do not carry negative biases. Integrate ethnic knowledge (e.g., culture) and gender-specific information (e.g., anti-trafficking awareness) into new curricula. Include gender/ethnic-specific targets in student learning outcomes and assessment framework (4-year LSE program). Lao Front for National Construction and Lao Women's Union are key stakeholders invited to national workshops on curriculum development.
B.2. Provide textbooks and learning materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide all lower/complete secondary schools in the 20 BESDP districts with textbooks and teachers guides.
B.3. Provide teacher development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide in-service training for all teachers, regardless of ethnicity or gender. Disaggregate training participation records by sex and ethnicity. Develop in-service modules in selected subject areas that are fully sensitive to gender and ethnic group issues and free of negative biases
Component C: Strengthening Capacity for Education Management	
C.1. Strengthen EMIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disaggregate data in the information system by sex and by ethnicity for the EMIS (including the TMIS) at the national, provincial, district and school level. With other partners, provide equal capacity building opportunities for women and officials from ethnic groups from MOE, PES, DEB and school staff for improved data collection, processing, computer training and management of EMIS and TMIS.

BESDP Components	Actions proposed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review questionnaires and other instruments to ensure that disaggregated information can be collected from schools, pupils, education staff, and PES. • Workshop participants include men and women, irrespective of ethnicity. • Explore ways of involving the school management committee in verifying data.
C.2. Strengthen planning and budget development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take into consideration gender and ethnic-specific issues into new planning format and process. Formats allow information to be disaggregated by sex and ethnicity. • Male and female staffs, of different ethnicity, have equal opportunity to attend workshops to assess/validate improved budget and actual expenditure format, modern financial management techniques and data collection instruments. • Provincial/district education plans include specific sections on improving access and quality of education for the poor disaggregated by gender and ethnicity.
C.3. Strengthen the central inventory system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen to ensure all physical assets entered into the central inventory system are Government-owned.
Implementation Arrangements	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GEMEUE is represented in the PMU and shall be responsible for implementing and monitoring the GEGDP. GEMEUE shall have equal access to BESDP-supported capacity building programs (e.g., workshops on MTEF, budgets, formats, and data). • GEMEUE will be represented in the committee that will oversee the implementation of the EDG program and the LSSG scholarship scheme. • A member of the GEMEUE will be represented on the PMU for BESDP • An international gender/social development specialist (2 p-m) and a national gender/social development specialist (4 p-m) will assist in implementation.

EDG=education development grants, GEMEUE=Gender and ethnic minorities education unit, LS=lower secondary, LSE=lower secondary education, LSSG=lower secondary student grant, MTEF=midterm expenditure framework, PMU=project management unit, p-m=person-months

E. Implementation Arrangements

14. Implementation arrangements and estimated costs of the GEGDP have been integrated into the overall arrangements and total budget of the BESDP. A gender and ethnic education unit (GEMEUE) was established in the Department of General Education (DGE/MOE) for the Basic Education (Girls) Project. In addition to project management, it plays an important role in overseeing gender mainstreaming efforts in education.⁴ GEMEUE will be represented in the project management unit (PMU), and will oversee the implementation of the GEGDP. Representatives from the Lao Women's Union and the Lao Front for National Construction will play important roles in facilitating participation by girls/women and ethnic groups in project activities. International and national consulting services will help integrate ethnic and gender concerns into activities during implementation. They will work with GEMEUE in establishing sex- and ethnic-disaggregated indicators for project performance monitoring and evaluation, and coordinate with other specialists (i.e., gender/social development specialists) in implementing BESDP activities. Progress reports will provide updates on the effect of the BESDP on gender and ethnicity. The midterm review mission will consider past updates and make adjustments, as required.

⁴ GEMEUE recently prepared a draft Gender and Education Policy, and has submitted it to the Prime Minister's Office for approval (expected by end-2006).